



Knotts Island, N.C.—At least one motorcycle rider believes in helmets and steel-toed boots. While driving his motorcycle along a rural highway, a PO2 tried to pass a car driven by a 15-year-old with a learner's permit (parent also in the car). He was running about 55 or 60 mph in a 55-mph zone when the 15-year-old turned left without a signal. The motorcyclist swerved but wasn't able to avoid a collision. He hit the car on the left side.

The motorcyclist was thrown through his windshield and then hit the ground. His injuries included a broken right toe, separated kneecap, broken right arm, and a two-inch cut on one of his other toes. The estimated lost work time is 30 days, with 60 days of limited duty.

According to doctors who examined the victim, the helmet saved his life, and the steel-toed boots prevented loss of his right foot. ❏

Portsmouth, Va.—While playing basketball at a base gym, a PO3 lost his balance after bumping another player and fell. To break his fall, he extended his arms. He felt a slight stinging in both arms but continued playing basketball.

Later, though, discomfort forced him to go to ship's medical, where a corpsman referred him to a base clinic. X-rays revealed he had fractured both arms. He went to a naval hospital for treatment. Doctors there put both arms in a sling.

The victim was ordered to spend 14 days on convalescent leave, with light duty to follow. He also was scheduled for a re-evaluation in three weeks to determine physical-therapy requirements. ❏

Bellingham, Wash.—An emergency-room visit and six stitches later, a Coast Guard seaman returned to work. He had been using a razor blade to cut a piece of plastic when the razor blade slipped and put a one-inch cut across the tip of his thumb. Inattention was the leading culprit in this mishap. ❏


Norfolk, Va.—It sometimes doesn't pay to turn around and go back. Just ask a PO2 who was in a crosswalk at an intersection when he realized he was going against the traffic. As he turned around to go back, he walked into the side of a pickup, lost his balance, and fell. The pickup ran over his leg and broke it. He spent four days in a hospital. ❏

Virginia Beach, Va.—A PO3 is permanently disabled because of a reckless tractor-trailer driver. The PO3 was rounding a curve on his motorcycle when he encountered the tractor-trailer. It was 20 inches inside his lane and had a one-foot overhang. The motorcycle got caught in the trailer's wheels and was dragged more than 25 feet.


The PO3's head hit the road. He suffered a spinal injury, a broken shoulder, and a road abrasion on his back, and is paralyzed from the waist down. He was moved to an out-of-state veteran's hospital to await discharge from the Navy.

The tractor-trailer driver was charged with reckless driving, operating an unsafe commercial motor vehicle, and transporting an overwidth load without a permit. ❏

Big Bear Lake, Calif.—He had waist and hip pads, gloves with wrist guards, and goggles, but those protective devices didn't stop an ensign from spraining his back while snowboarding. On his third run down the mountain, the ensign tried to avoid colliding with another snowboarder. He used the standard procedure (e.g., turn parallel to the hill and sit).


Unfortunately, his board stuck in the snow as he was turning, and the momentum caused him to pull the muscles in his lower back. He lost only a half-day of work. 

Chesapeake, Va.—A family outing at an indoor roller rink to celebrate her son's birthday sent a PO2 to a naval hospital with a broken wrist. The problem started when she lost her balance and fell backward. While landing on her rump, she extended her hands. She didn't feel any pain until she started getting off the floor. A sharp pain hit her right wrist, and it gave when she used her hand to push herself up.


The victim first went to a local hospital but was transferred to the naval hospital, where X-rays revealed the broken wrist. Doctors installed a temporary cast and waited six days for the swelling to subside enough for them to set the broken bone. She lost 37 workdays. 

Aberdeen, Wash.—A semi-truck slams into your car on the way to work. Your car then goes under the truck and spins out to the far side of the road. Don't say it couldn't happen, because it did. The victim is a Coast Guard seaman, who was driving a VW Jetta when the truck ran a red light and caused the mishap.

The seaman lost consciousness for a few seconds but had come to and had climbed out of the wreckage by the time police arrived. They took him to a hospital where he was treated for pain and minor bruises. He also was given a sick-in-quarters chit for two days.

The victim was wearing seat belts, and his car was equipped with an air bag. However, the air bag didn't deploy because the truck hit the car on the driver's side. 

Orange Park, Fla.—A PO2 and his female passenger were crossing a county road on his motorcycle when a car hit them from behind. Both riders were ejected and had to be life-flighted to a local hospital.

The PO2 was OK, but the passenger suffered a broken left leg and a cut to her face. While he dodged any injuries, and the results of a field-sobriety test were inconclusive, the PO2 didn't avoid a ticket for violation of right-of-way. 

Oak Harbor, Wash.—That first scratch or dent on a new set of wheels hurts but not as badly as a broken ankle. Just ask an ensign who was returning home from a ride on his new bike and failed to make a turn. To avoid an oncoming car, he steered the bike into a ditch and tried to slow his forward travel by extending his right leg.

The ensign admitted to being fatigued from a lack of sleep the previous night. He also admitted he wasn't familiar with his new bike (he had taken delivery earlier in the day). The bike also was considerably bigger than the one he had used for the motorcycle driving-safety course.

He lost 36 workdays. 

Gaeta, Italy—A fireman apprentice with a BAC of .239 was riding a moped when he collided head-on with a car traveling in the opposite direction. He was thrown into the front, passenger-side windshield and suffered a compound fracture of his right leg—a mild injury when you consider he wasn't wearing a helmet, safety boots, or reflective vest. He spent 45 days in a hospital. 